



NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

NEBRASKA

Revised State Plan

**Updated
March 7, 2011**

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NEBRASKA REVISED STATE PLAN

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Background on Nebraska School Districts:

Nebraska is a predominately rural state with a student population in 2009-2010 of 294,949 school students. This was an increase of 2,926 students from the 2008-2009 school year. These students attended school at the 253 K-12 public school districts, ranging in size from the smallest district with 83 students to the largest school district in the state with 48,692 students. Prior to 2006-2007, there were 467 school districts in Nebraska. This significant change in district numbers was the result of legislative action in 2005 that required all Class I (elementary only) school districts and their staff to affiliate with K-12 districts by the beginning of the 2006-2007 school year. Thus, there are no longer any Class I districts in the state. There are 20 Class II districts (among the smallest districts in the state and defined as districts having 1,000 inhabitants or less that maintain both elementary and high school grades under the direction of a single school board.) 231 districts are Class III districts, and 189 (or 75%) of all districts qualify as REAP (Rural Education Achievement Program) districts. PK-12 enrollments in the 231 Class III districts range from 83 students in the McPherson County Public School in the western Sandhills to 22,647 students in the eastern Millard Public Schools. Many of these rural districts are located in sparsely populated areas of the state where it is not unusual for students to have to commute 30 miles or more to get to the nearest school. 25 districts are the only school district in a county, and 66% of all of the school districts in the state have 500 or fewer students. There is one Class IV district, Lincoln Public Schools with 34,915 students, and one Class V district, Omaha Public Schools with 48,692 students. These two districts would be considered urban schools, and are both located in the eastern part of the state, approximately fifty (50) miles apart.

All teachers and administrators in Nebraska's public schools must have current Nebraska teaching or administrative certificates if employed by a public school district. State-approved educator preparation programs are available at 16 institutions of higher learning in the state, and all are committed to the mission of training the very best educators for Nebraska that is possible.

Nebraska takes very seriously the goals of NCLB, and the state's educational leaders are committed to ensuring that all students, no matter what size the school, receive a quality education. Based on research studies over the past ten years and knowing how very important a highly qualified teacher impacts student achievement, Nebraska school district administrators and others are working diligently to make sure all teachers are 100% NCLB-qualified.

Requirement 1: The revised plan must provide a detailed analysis of the core academic subject classes in the State that are currently *not* being taught by highly qualified teachers. The analysis must, in particular, address schools that are not making adequate yearly progress (AYP) and whether or not these schools have more acute needs than do other schools in attracting highly qualified teachers. The analysis must also identify the districts and schools around the state where significant numbers of teachers do not meet HQT standards, and examine whether or not there are particular hard-to-staff courses frequently taught by non-highly qualified teachers.

- 1) Does the revised plan include an analysis of classes taught by teachers who are not highly qualified? Is the analysis based on accurate classroom level data?**

The Nebraska revised plan includes both NCLB Qualified Courses/Teachers and NCLB Non-Qualified Courses/Teachers as described in the following tables, and now includes special education teachers. This information is found on the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) website at www.education.ne.gov under the State of the Schools Report (SOSR) section/State or <http://reportcard.education.ne.gov> and includes information about NCLB Qualified Teachers, as well as NCLB Non-Qualified Teachers for two consecutive school years. The information about non-HQ teachers has been added to comply with NCLB requirements and is now included in all SOSRs. This site also provides information about individual districts and buildings for multiple years, and is available for public review. The data on the website identifies the percentage of NCLB core academic area courses that are taught by Highly Qualified Teachers and includes data about courses taught by non-Highly Qualified teachers at the building, district, and state levels. State level information concerning NCLB Qualified Teachers is reflected in Table 1 below, Nebraska NCLB Qualified Teachers, 2008-2009 and 2009-2010. State level information about NCLB Not-Qualified Teachers for the same two school years is reflected in Table 2 on page 3.

TABLE 1.
NEBRASKA NCLB QUALIFIED TEACHERS, 2008-2009 and 2009-2010.

NCLB Qualified Teachers				
NCLB Content Areas	2008 - 2009		2009 - 2010	
	Number of courses	Percent NCLB Qualified	Number of courses	Percent NCLB Qualified
CIVICS AND GOVERNMENT	1,415	99.79%	1,529	99.80%
ECONOMICS	339	99.71%	369	99.73%
ELEMENTARY	7,672	99.90%	8,191	99.96%
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	16,650	98.64%	19,040	99.38%
FOREIGN LANGUAGES	4,358	99.13%	4,673	99.72%
HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY	6,188	99.00%	7,083	99.39%
MATHEMATICS	11,007	97.81%	12,032	99.06%
NATURAL SCIENCES	8,509	98.97%	9,528	99.48%
No Curriculum on File	124	0.00%	1	0.00%
SELF-CONTAINED	317	98.11%	253	100.00%
VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS	14,244	99.70%	16,951	99.89%
Overall Count/Average	70,823	98.81%	79,650	99.54%

* For NCLB purposes, one elementary teacher is considered as one course.

NCLB also requires States to identify the number and percentage of NCLB qualified teachers in high- and low-poverty elementary schools. To define 'high- and low-poverty' schools, all schools are ranked by the percentage of their enrollment eligible for free or reduced lunches in the School Lunch Program. This list is then divided into quartiles. The schools in the quartile with the highest percentages of poverty are the 'high-poverty' schools. The schools in the quartile with lowest percentages of poverty are used for the comparison.

Nebraska's emergency teaching certificate is the Provisional Commitment Certificate. In 2009-10, 2 NCLB teachers were teaching on this certificate. This represents .01136% of the 17,609 NCLB teachers in the state.

TABLE 2.
NEBRASKA NCLB QUALIFIED TEACHERS, 2008-2009 and 2009-2010.

NCLB Non-Qualified Teachers				
NCLB Content Areas	2008 - 2009		2009 - 2010	
	Number of courses	Percent NCLB Qualified	Number of courses	Percent NCLB Qualified
CIVICS AND GOVERNMENT	3	0.21%	3	0.20%
ECONOMICS	1	0.29%	1	0.27%
ELEMENTARY	8	0.10%	3	0.04%
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	227	1.36%	118	0.62%
FOREIGN LANGUAGES	38	0.87%	13	0.28%
HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY	62	1.00%	43	0.61%
MATHEMATICS	241	2.19%	113	0.94%
NATURAL SCIENCES	88	1.03%	50	0.52%
No Curriculum on File	124	100.00%	1	100.00%
SELF-CONTAINED	6	1.89%	0	0.00%
VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS	43	0.30%	19	0.11%
Overall Count/Average	841	1.19%	364	0.46%

NOTE: NCLB Qualified Teacher data presented here includes Special Education teachers.

Source: *Nebraska Department of Education, 2009-2010 State of the Schools Report, October 2010*

In response to NCLB requirements, the Nebraska data system and the programming that supports it underwent major revisions to enable collection and analysis of NCLB Qualified data, including Special Education teachers and courses taught online. The Nebraska Student and Staff Record System (NSSRS) was implemented beginning in 2006-2007, after being piloted in 2005-2006. Additional modifications were required to incorporate these groups and the data and analyses were made available in a much improved system which can be used for state and federal reporting. (Prior to this, schools submitted a Fall Personnel Report which identified all licensed employees in a school district and their qualifications.) There is now more accurate and more detailed data available rather than just summary data through the NSSRS Staff Snapshot and NSSRS Staff Assignment Templates (due to NDE by September 15 every year.) This system has allowed local school districts greater efficiency by being able to collect data electronically only one time rather than several times. The data is used by NDE for the many and various state and federal reports that are submitted. The data system also identifies all licensed employees of each school district, and each teacher's teaching assignment is identified by course name and number in the Personnel/Curriculum Report Reporting System, which each school district reports by the end of February each year. This information is then matched against the Teacher

Certification system to determine the percentage of courses that each teacher is teaching for which s/he is qualified. School districts are contacted by NDE staff when there are any discrepancies.

Data provided in Table 1 on page 3, NEBRASKA NCLB QUALIFIED TEACHERS, 2008-2009 and 2009-2010, identifies the subject areas and percentage of courses taught by teachers who are highly qualified (HQ). Since the information is provided through the Personnel/Curriculum Report in the NSSRS system and linked to the Teacher Certification system, it is very accurate, as all of this data impacts the accreditation (Rule 10) of the schools in Nebraska. Rule 10 Accreditation and Approval requirements are more stringent than NCLB-Qualified requirements. Nebraska has made progress in all content areas over these two years, and at the same time, the number of courses available to students has increased significantly. A review of the 2008-09 school year data as compared to 2009-10 school year data shows even greater improvement in each subject area as well as in the overall total percentage of NCLB Qualified Teachers. In 08-09, 98.81% of all courses were taught by HQ teachers, and in 2009-10, that percentage had increased to 99.54%, an increase of .73%. At the same time, the number of courses offered had increased from 70,823 courses offered in 08-09 to 79,650 courses offered in 09-10, an increase of over 8,800 courses. Nebraska continues to work on the goal of having 100% NCLB Qualified Teachers, and through the strong efforts of many, is very close to reaching that goal. The use of the HOUSSE process is used in extreme “hardship” cases, which will be described later in this report.

Table 2 on page 4, NEBRASKA NCLB NON-QUALIFIED TEACHERS, 2008-2009 and 2009-2010, compares the courses taught over the two years by non-qualified teachers. Upon review of this chart, there is a significant decrease in the number of courses throughout the state being taught by non-HQ teachers. Perhaps one explanation as to why there are even any courses taught by non-HQ teachers is the difficulty districts, especially those in sparsely populated areas of the state, have in attracting teachers, or in being able to even offer a full-time position for some of the subject areas. For example, in the smallest K-12 schools (classified as Class II schools and defined as districts having a population of 1,000 inhabitants or less that maintains both elementary and high school grades under the direction of a single school board), it is often difficult to find a social studies teacher who is qualified to teach history, geography, economics, civics, and government. Many social studies teachers might be prepared to teach history, but are not endorsed in the field endorsement of Social Sciences. There are currently 20 school districts in the Class II classification. (Table 9 includes Class II schools data compared to other classifications of school districts.) Because Nebraska is a rural state, there are a great number of small rural districts with 20 or fewer teachers. Having one course taught by a non-qualified teacher significantly impacts the districts’ NCLB Qualified Teachers percentage in these many small districts. Larger districts, too sometimes have problems in finding appropriately endorsed teachers for each and every classroom, due to teacher shortage areas (described later in this document.) There were also 9 teachers in the state that have Provisional Special Education endorsements for 2009-2010 as compared to 16 in 2008-09, so progress is also being made by special education teachers. Again, that one special education teacher would have an impact on a district’s NCLB-Qualified Teacher percentage, even if s/he was only teaching one course for which h/she was not NCLB-qualified to teach, and most likely, is teaching that one course to only one student.

In comparing the NCLB Not-Qualified Courses data from the 2006-07 SOSR Report, when 1,639 courses were taught by non-HQ teachers to the NCLB Not-Qualified 2009-2010 data, the number of

NCLB Not-Qualified Courses has decreased dramatically to 364 courses taught by non-HQ teachers. It should also be noted that the number of courses offered has increased from 65,910 courses in 2006-2007 to 79,650 courses in 2009-2010. The percentage of non-HQ courses has decreased from 2.47% in 2006-07 to .46% in 2009-2010, even with an almost 21% (13,740 more courses) increase in courses offered. Even comparing data from two consecutive years, 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 (Table 1), indicates progress in every content area. Overall, Nebraska school districts are showing continued progress toward the goal of having 100% NCLB Qualified Teachers.

Information about the qualifications of all teachers has been provided to all school districts for all general education teachers for many years. Nebraska Rule 10 Accreditation Reports are created by NDE and identify the courses in a district/building that are being taught by teachers who are not endorsed to teach that subject and/or grade level. These reports are identified as the “non-endorsed reports” and are provided to the school districts in the spring of the current school year so that assignment changes can be made when possible, and to assist districts in the hiring decisions when there is an opportunity to correct the assignments. Continuing accreditation for the school district is dependent upon the district meeting the percentages required in the Nebraska Department of Education’s Rule 10, Accreditation of Schools. Rule 10—School Accreditation information is also available on the NDE website at <http://www.education.ne.gov> (Rule 10).

Another improvement made through the NSSRS Reporting System, is that all districts can now obtain information about those staff members who are not NCLB-Qualified during the current school year (beginning in the spring of 2010.) Previously, NCLB Not-Qualified reports for general education and special education teachers were mailed to districts in September of the following school year. Districts can now use the information in the Non-NCLB Qualified Report via the Portal to correct assignments where possible, or to develop a professional development plan for each teacher who is not Highly Qualified in all NCLB courses which s/he teaches. In some cases, the use of the HOUSSE (high objective uniform State standard of evaluation) application might be necessary due to the fact that many rural districts cannot afford to offer a full-time position because of budget restrictions. Many times, a teacher has to teach a course or two for which they are not endorsed. Therefore, the HOUSSE process might have to be used in some of these districts.

2) Does the analysis focus on the staffing needs of schools that are not making AYP? Do these schools have high percentages of classes taught by teachers who are not highly qualified?

Because Nebraska is a predominantly rural state, with a large number of school districts and buildings across the state, several districts are separated by many miles. In 2009-2010, there were 253 school districts with 1,023 school buildings, as compared to the 467 school districts in Nebraska during the 04-05 school year.

An analysis of the data for LEAs at the building level that have not made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for two consecutive years is provided in the following Table 3, and is also available on the NDE State of the Schools Report at <http://reportcard.nde.state.ne.us>

TABLE 3.

ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS (AYP) SCHOOLS, 2009-2010.

District/School Building ID	School Building Population	Avg. % HQT 2009-2010	Building Minority %	Building Poverty %	Building Avg. Yrs. Teaching Experience	% of Teachers in Building w/ > 3 yrs. Teaching Experience
07-0006-005	255	100	32.94	52.16	15.36	77.27
19-0123-001	435	100	59.77	60.23	15.14	74.29
23-0071-002	124	100	03.23	41.13	21.00	100.00
28-0001-115	532	100	87.97	90.79	10.63	84.78
34-0001-002	226	100	10.18	49.56	17.64	86.36
54-0505-002	128	100	96.88	70.31	10.93	64.71
55-0001-002*	407	100	52.33	82.80	15.56	76.74
55-0001-005*	773	100	40.49	77.49	11.65	81.94
55-0001-022	386	100	66.32	91.19	09.49	60.47
55-0001-024	317	100	59.94	85.17	13.24	82.35
55-0001-034*	525	100	73.71	92.19	13.25	73.08
55-0001-036*	495	100	32.93	68.69	14.47	78.26
55-0001-041*	458	100	55.46	82.75	13.18	79.55
57-0501-002	99	100	03.03	45.45	14.17	92.31
59-0001-002*	203	100	78.33	63.55	18.33	86.36
59-0001-003	118	98.57	67.80	56.78	14.37	94.74
70-0002-002*	342	100	02.92	27.78	19.59	90.32
71-0001-003*	272	100	41.22	62.72	16.75	85.00
79-0002-002*	106	100	45.37	89.81	11.82	66.67
81-0010-015*	140	100	30.00	50.71	10.50	85.71
87-0013-002*	224	100	97.32	83.93	13.05	87.50
AYP School Bldg. Averages	313	99.93	49.44	67.87	14.29	81.35
All Nebraska Districts/School Building Averages	1164(dist.)	99.54	18.85	41.28	15.98	85.96

* School building met AYP goals for 2009-2010. A school must make all AYP goals for two consecutive years to no longer be considered as being in need of improvement under NCLB.

Source: *Nebraska Department of Education, 2009-2010 State of the Schools Report, October 2010*

Table 3 clearly indicates these AYP buildings do not have significant staffing needs that are any different from other school districts/buildings. The average NCLB Qualified % for these AYP buildings is slightly higher than the Nebraska Statewide Average of NCLB Qualified Teachers—99.93% as compared to 99.54% for all school districts statewide (Table 1)—a difference of only .39%. 20 of the 21 school buildings have a 100% NCLB Qualified staff, and the only one that does not has a 98.57% NCLB Qualified staff. (In that school building, one teacher was teaching a middle school course without the proper endorsement, and being a very small school, that one course affected the NCLB Qualified teacher average more significantly than would have been so in a larger district.) These AYP districts do have higher minority percentages and higher poverty averages, but similar years of teaching experience among the staff (14.29 years as compared to the statewide average of 15.98 years), and the percentage of teachers in the building with more than three years of teaching experience—81.35% in the AYP buildings (as compared to 85.96% statewide), is not significantly different.

Based on review of the data and the Nebraska averages for all districts for years of teaching experience, geographic location, and size, it does not appear that there is any significant difference in the staffing needs of the AYP school buildings as compared to the rest of Nebraska's school buildings. It should be noted that of Nebraska's 1,023 school buildings, only 2.05% are AYP buildings. These 21 AYP school buildings from 14 school districts are all included in School Improvement. 11 of these buildings did meet AYP goals for 2009-10, and are designated with an asterisk (*). A school must make all AYP goals for two consecutive years to no longer be considered as being in need of improvement under

NCLB. Non-Title I School Buildings that have not made AYP for two consecutive years are also listed on the NDE State of the Schools Report.

(<http://reportcard.education.ne.gov/Page/AYPStatus.aspx?Level=st>)

3) Does the analysis identify particular groups of teachers to which the State’s plan must pay particular attention, such as special education teachers, mathematics or science teachers, or multi-subject teachers in rural schools?

Nebraska’s State of the Schools Report (SOSR) reports annually on the number of courses that are taught by Highly Qualified teachers. Data for the 2009-10 school year indicates that the largest percentages of courses being taught by non-HQ teachers are in the areas of mathematics (.94%) and language arts (.62%), according to Table 2. Data for all districts and buildings is found on the Nebraska Department of Education website <http://reportcard.education.ne.gov/State/StateHome.aspx?Level=st> and is available for public review.

The NCLB Non-Qualified Teachers information from Table 2 (page 4), in 2009-2010 shows Mathematics as the subject area with the highest percentage of courses taught by NCLB Non-Qualified Teachers—113 courses or .94% of all mathematics courses. In 2009-2010, 12,032 mathematics courses were offered in Nebraska schools and 99.06% were taught by NCLB Qualified Teachers, as reflected in Table 1 on page 3. Mathematics was also the area that had the highest percentage of courses taught by NCLB Non-Qualified teachers in 2008-2009, although remarkable improvement was made. Again, one mathematics course taught by a teacher who is not appropriately endorsed in mathematics at one of the 189 smaller rural districts (REAP districts) can have a major impact on the percentage of NCLB Qualified Courses, especially in those schools that have 20 or fewer teachers. Many times, a teacher who is not appropriately endorsed has to teach one middle school mathematics course, as there is only one mathematics teacher in that small district who is assigned to teach as many mathematics courses as possible. Yet, there are still students who need a mathematics teacher for Grade 7 Math, for example. As a result, one course might be taught by a teacher who is not appropriately endorsed, and that significantly impacts the school district’s NCLB Qualified Teacher status. (Mathematics is also one of the shortage areas discussed in the Teacher Shortage Survey information on page 9.)

Governor David Heineman has recently given special attention to recruiting mathematics and science teachers in Nebraska’s schools. One of the Governor’s eight goals in the Nebraska P-16 Initiative is to increase by five percent the number of teacher education graduates in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) within Nebraska postsecondary institutions. In addition, Nebraska’s loan forgiveness programs for teachers in Nebraska gives special attention to those teachers seeking initial certification in a shortage area. If the teacher agrees to teach in Nebraska for a period of two years after completing that degree, the loan is completely forgiven. The Attracting Excellence to Teaching Program (AETP) currently has 30 candidates seeking an endorsement in mathematics, and 22 candidates seeking an endorsement in English. In May, 2009, the Enhancing Excellence in Teacher Preparation program went into effect, and had 252 current Nebraska classroom teachers receive loans to begin or complete their masters degree programs. Data will be available in the near future as to the impact this opportunity makes on Nebraska school districts and having NCLB Qualified teachers in each and every course that is being taught.



There has and continues to be a strong effort on the part of Nebraska Department of Education Special Education office staff and others, to have all Special Education teachers become 100% NCLB Qualified, as many of the 364 courses that are considered to have NCLB Non-Qualified Teachers are being taught by special education teachers. NDE staff members continually provide assistance to the state's teachers, especially special education teachers, in their efforts to become NCLB Qualified. They offer professional development workshops and provide many other opportunities for teachers to become NCLB Qualified. The NDE Special Education Office provides grants to all Educational Service Units in Nebraska. These grants, "Improving Learning for Children with Disabilities" (ILCD) designate staff at the unit level who then support the school district special education programs within the unit area. One of the roles of the ILCD facilitators is to assist the district special education staff in becoming NCLB qualified. The NDE Special Education Office has also offered a pilot grant with the University of Nebraska in Omaha to support the training of non-traditional/non-endorsed individuals to become NCLB qualified. In 2009-2010, this included 38 special education teachers in 16 districts, and 9 of these teachers have provisional special education endorsements, which means they are in the process of completing their final program requirements.

Each year, the Nebraska Department of Education contracts for a Teacher Shortage Survey to determine which content areas are in greatest demand. The 2009-2010 Teacher Shortage Survey, which had a 96.5% response rate (245 districts responding), identified special education, world languages (Spanish), speech language pathology, English, natural sciences, and mathematics as the areas with the greatest needs. Special education teachers have historically been the largest area of shortage, and that was again reflected in the 2009-2010 survey. This independent survey also shows consistently that schools with less than 500 students report the greatest number of unfilled vacancies in that 34 of the total 64 unfilled vacancies occurred in districts of 500 or fewer students. The entire Teacher Shortage Survey can be reviewed on the NDE Website at <http://www.education.ne.gov/neteacherred/documents/teachershortagereport.pdf>

The Nebraska Department of Education provides a website for school districts and applicants to post their vacancies and candidate availability. This website, www.nebraskaeducationjobs.com, is experiencing much higher usage, especially by smaller school districts that do not have the personnel or the budget to recruit educators. In 2009-2010, there were 255,000 visits to the website and over 2.8 million hits. This website is currently serving approximately 1,000 customers a day, with the peak months being March-June, and there has been a huge increase in website usage since 2002-2003, which was the first year this website was available. (That year, there were 32,100 total visits and 200,000 hits.) Prospective teachers can search for a job and then apply online and school districts can post job vacancies, all free of charge. The website is updated daily, and a weekly e-mail notifies subscribers of the latest job vacancies posted to the site.

Located on the NDE website is the NCLB Qualified Teacher Lookup System (http://datacenter.education.ne.gov/nclb_lookup/nclb_lookup.dll/EXEC), at no cost to districts. Administrators or other human resources personnel can access this system to check the NCLB-Qualified Status of a Nebraska certified teacher when making hiring decisions. Should they have questions about any individual teacher's NCLB qualified status, they can always contact NDE.

These combined efforts, along with others, are helping to recruit and retain teachers, especially in the above-mentioned shortage areas, and in addition, are helping Nebraska to achieve the goal that all of the students in Nebraska's 253 public schools have 100% Highly Qualified teachers in all of their classrooms.

4) Does the analysis identify districts and schools around the State where significant numbers of teachers do not meet HQT standards?

Among all 253 school districts, 99.54% of teachers statewide are NCLB Qualified. This includes those teachers who have successfully completed the HOUSSSE. As stated earlier, the smaller school districts (and usually the most rural) have the greatest difficulties finding teachers who are qualified to teach multiple subjects. This accounts for the disparity in percentages of HQT teachers in the 189 REAP districts and the 20 smallest (or Class II) school districts. Table 4 below compares NCLB Qualified percentages in each of the content areas of the Class II (smallest) districts, 189 REAP-eligible districts, and all districts in the state.

Table 4.
NCLB Qualified Teachers, 2009-2010.

NCLB Content Areas	% taught by HQ teachers in 20 smallest/Class II districts	% taught by HQ teachers in 189 REAP-eligible districts	% taught by HQ teachers, all districts Statewide
Civics and Government	100%	100%	99.80%
Economics	100%	100%	99.73%
Elementary	100%	100%	99.96%
English/Language Arts	98.61%	99.44%	99.38%
Foreign Languages	100%	100%	99.72%
History and Geography	100%	99.55%	99.39%
Mathematics	98.85%	99.16%	99.06%
Natural Sciences	96.31%	99.35%	99.48%
Visual and Performing Arts	99.38%	99.85%	99.89%
Average/Total	98.92%	99.51%	99.54%

Bolded cells indicate lower percentages than the statewide percentage.

Source: Nebraska Department of Education, 2009-2010 State of the Schools Report, October 2010

The data included in Table 4 above demonstrates that there are some, but not significant differences between the statewide data, the smallest school districts (Class II), and the REAP-eligible districts. Natural Sciences, Mathematics, English/Language Arts, and Visual and Performing Arts are the areas of greatest need for the smallest Class II districts, even though there are only slight differences appearing in those content areas. All other content areas show 100% NCLB-Qualified Teachers. REAP-eligible districts show very slight differences in the Natural Sciences and Visual and Performing Arts content areas. This data also follows closely the information discovered in the Teacher Shortage Survey, which is conducted independently each year. Special education, foreign languages, English/Language Arts, natural sciences, and mathematics show up as shortage areas year after year. To further explain why the percentages are not all 100% NCLB Qualified, many times there might be only one course in a content area that is taught by a teacher who is not HQ. Since there are fewer courses taught at many of these schools due to the small size of the school districts, a district's HQ percentage might show up as a rather low percentage, when actually there is only one course that is not being taught by a HQ teacher. Rural districts also hire fewer teachers and expect them to teach a wider variety of courses, simply

because they do not have budgets that allow hiring more teachers, and do not have qualified people available to teach only one or two classes. It would be almost impossible to attract a teacher to many areas in the state if they could not employ the teacher full-time. Therefore, one course might have to be taught by a teacher who is not HQ for that particular course. The HOUSSE is especially important to the vast majority of small, rural districts. In 2009-2010, there were only three of the 20 Class II districts that did not have a 100% NCLB-Qualified staff. In one of these districts, the Special Education teacher has a Provisional Special Education certificate, and is currently working on completing her endorsement. In another one of the districts, the science teacher quit during the first quarter of the year, and the only certificated teacher in the area was not endorsed in natural sciences. That teacher is currently completing her natural sciences endorsement, but that did not take care of the “emergency situation” in which the district was suddenly found to be in.

Of the 189 REAP-eligible districts, only 23 of them had one teacher that was not 100% NCLB-Qualified for at least one course s/he was teaching. Four of these districts had teachers with Provisional Special Education certificates, and all of those teachers are currently working to complete their endorsement requirements.

In 2009-2010, there were only 91 total teachers teaching a course (or courses) for which they were not properly endorsed in all of the 253 districts in the state. There were 24,467 teachers in Nebraska in 2009-2010, which indicates only 0.37% of teachers were teaching at least one course for which they were not properly NCLB-qualified. It should be noted that only 15% (39 districts) of the 253 total districts had any teachers that were not NCLB Qualified for the courses they were teaching in 2009-2010, which decreased dramatically from the 2008-2009 school year, when approximately 43% of districts had at least one non-NCLB qualified teacher. Nebraska’s districts are demonstrating they are very committed to having 100% NCLB-qualified teachers in each and every classroom across the state, no matter the circumstances.

With the improvements to the NSSRS Data System, the conscious efforts by local school district administrators, and the ongoing support from NDE, there should be fewer and fewer non-NCLB qualified teachers in the state’s classrooms in coming years.

To identify districts and schools where significant numbers of teachers do not meet HQT standards, Nebraska has defined “significant” as more than 10% of total courses taught by teachers in a district. It is critically important to note that because so many districts have small numbers of teachers, (many districts have less than 20 teachers total), a minor change in a teaching assignment can significantly impact the district’s HQT percentage. This is certainly true in Hayes Center, a small rural district located in southwest Nebraska with 140 K-12 students, which is one of the districts where only one teacher is teaching two foreign language courses for which s/he is not properly endorsed. The HQ percentage for that school district is 96.67% NCLB Qualified. In another much larger district in northwestern Nebraska, Alliance Public Schools (K-12 population of 1427), there is also only one teacher teaching two language courses for which s/he is not properly endorsed, and the overall HQ percentage for that district is 99.19% NCLB Qualified. This definitely illustrates how much the smaller districts’ HQ percentages are affected as compared to larger districts.

Analysis of the LEA data indicates that only two districts in the state are below 90% HQT for 2009-2010. These districts are a major focus for technical assistance by NDE, teacher education institutions, the regional service centers (Education Service Units), and SAHE (State Agency for Higher Education/ Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Post-Secondary Education, or NCCPE) project coordinators. Table 5 below provides information about these two districts and their data for the 09-10 school year. It is interesting to note that one of these districts is located in the far southwest corner of the state and the other is located in the far northeast corner of the state.

Table 5.
Nebraska K-12 Districts with less than 90% HQ Teachers in 2009-2010.

SCHOOL ID #	K-12 POPULATION	ELEMENTARY	ENGLISH/ LANGUAGE ARTS	FOREIGN LANGUAGE	MATHEMATICS	SCIENCES	CIVICS AND GOVERNMENT	ECONOMICS	HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY	VISUAL AND PERF. ARTS	MINORITY %	POVERTY (FRL) %	AVG. YRS. TOTAL EXPERIENCE	% Of Teachers with >3 yrs. Exp.	AVG % HQT
15-0010-	548	94.44	86.36	100	66.67	85.00	100	100	100	100	19.64	31.82	19.12	96.00	89.22
26-0001-	413	100	68.75	100	80.00	93.33	100	Null	100	88.46	7.13	24.83	14.87	92.50	83.45
NE AVG	1164	99.96	99.38	99.72	99.06	99.48	99.80	99.73	99.39	99.89	11.93	39.72	16.91	86.83	99.54

Bolded numbers indicate those lower than the statewide average.

Source: Nebraska Department of Education, 2009-2010 State of the Schools Report, October 2010

Table 5 also provides comprehensive data for 2009-2010 concerning HQ teachers in the two districts whose percentage of courses taught by Highly Qualified teachers was less than 90 percent. Nebraska has no districts below 83.45% HQ. As a point of comparison, in the 06-07 school year, there were 17 districts with less than 90% percent of the courses taught by HQ teachers. The data includes not only HQ status, but the equity of distribution of experienced teachers. The statewide 2009-10 average population of the 253 PK-12 Nebraska districts is 1164, so clearly, these two districts are representative of the smaller, rural districts, and both are REAP-eligible districts. The total K-12 student enrollment of these two districts is 961, or .33% of students in the state. Content areas that are less than the statewide average appear in English/Language Arts, Mathematics, and Sciences for both districts, which follows closely with the Teacher Shortage Survey information on page 9 concerning teacher shortage areas in the state. One district shows a lower Elementary percentage and the other district shows a lower Visual and Performing Arts percentage of NCLB-Qualified teachers. Due to both districts being far from the population centers of the state and somewhat isolated, there likely are not enough endorsed teachers in those areas in their geographic areas. One district has a higher average years total experience than the statewide average, and one district is slightly lower than the statewide average in average years of teaching experience in the district, but both indicate years of teaching experience is not a factor. The 2009-2010 data for these districts is carefully analyzed to determine progress and needed technical assistance, as all districts and buildings receive on-site monitoring by the Nebraska Department of Education staff prepared to provide technical assistance on all segments of the LEA's Consolidated Plan. The staff members involved in this process meet on a regular basis. It should be noted that 99.54% of the state's 79,650 courses were taught by NCLB Qualified teachers in 2009-2010. (In 2007-2008, there were 70,744 or 98.42% of all courses taught by NCLB Qualified teachers.) It is interesting to note that the number of courses taught increased, as did the percentage of NCLB Qualified teachers. Nebraska is very close to having all teachers in all districts 100% NCLB-Qualified, but

at the same time realizes there might be individual school districts that fall short of that goal due to extenuating circumstances such as sudden or unforeseen changes in staff, for example.

5) Does the analysis identify particular courses that are often taught by non-highly qualified teachers?

The courses that were most frequently taught by non-NCLB qualified teachers in these two districts during 2009-2010 occurred in both elementary and secondary special education courses. The teachers of these courses are all endorsed in special education, but do not clearly show content endorsements, or they are not assigned at the appropriate grade level for the endorsement. This occurred in 15 of the courses. It should be noted also that this may have to do with the fact that there may have been errors as districts transitioned to the new NSSRS data reporting system. Professional development, additional college courses, and the Housse process are options for teachers who are not NCLB-Qualified. The NDE Special Education staff also strongly recommends that the special education teachers participate in professional development workshops conducted around the state each year. In other cases, mathematics and science courses were being taught by teachers not appropriately endorsed. One of the teachers has an advanced degree, but not in mathematics. Again, professional development, additional college courses, and the Housse process are options for those teachers. Since both of these districts are in rather remote, rural areas of the state, this follows very closely with the Teacher Shortage Survey information in that Special Education, English/Language Arts, Mathematics, and Sciences are indicated as shortage areas year after year. Very few of the students in the state of Nebraska are taught by non-NCLB teachers, but of the ones who are, these content areas show up more frequently than others. In looking at Statewide NCLB Non-Qualified Teachers in the chart on page two, Mathematics and English/Language Arts are the top two content areas that show courses taught by non-NCLB Qualified teachers for both 2008-2009 and 2009-2010. The situation is improving slightly at this time in that more and more courses are taught by NCLB-Qualified teachers.

The Nebraska Legislature has provided funding to strengthen the state's distance learning network so school districts would be able to access courses being taught elsewhere in the state. This system allows existing HQ teachers to reach students in buildings or districts where there might be a lack of HQ teachers on staff. Another option currently available to schools is to utilize online courses that are taught by a HQ teacher, which some districts are doing. Many of these courses are dual-credit courses taught at the secondary level and allow for high school students to gain college credit while still in high school.

Nebraska is utilizing three specific strategies to assist school districts in increasing their percentage of HQ teachers. The first strategy is the Transitional Teaching certificate program, which was developed through a federal Transition to Teaching Grant (and is Nebraska's alternative certification route.) This fairly new alternative certification program has had a total of 123 program completers as of December, 2010, and has 80 current participants who are in some phase of the Transitional Certification Program and are teaching in a Nebraska school district. The program is specifically designed for mid-career professionals and recent college graduates with baccalaureate degrees who wish to become certified Nebraska teachers, and who did not complete an approved educator preparation program.

Another strategy is the Attracting Excellence to Teaching Program (AETP), which was funded by the Nebraska State Legislature in 2006-07. To date, 579 forgivable loans totaling \$1,512,500 have been awarded to postsecondary students enrolled in a Nebraska approved teacher preparation program seeking their initial certification since 2006-2007. These teachers must teach in a Nebraska school system for at least two years after receiving their initial certificate for the loan to be forgiven.

The most recent strategy was a result of Nebraska State Legislature action in 2008-2009, entitled the Enhancing Excellence in Teaching Program (EETP). This is available to current Nebraska teachers who are enrolled in a graduate teacher education program at a recognized and approved Nebraska teacher preparation program and resulting in an advanced degree. It allows a teacher to receive \$175/credit hour, along with similar requirements to the Attracting Excellence to Teaching Program. (The teacher must be a Nebraska resident currently teaching in a Nebraska public or private school, and must be seeking a masters or advanced degree.) In the first year of this program, 268 teachers were awarded \$809,001. The Nebraska State Legislature has allocated \$1 million annually for the next eight years through the Excellence in Teaching Act, and divided the allocation so AETP is funded at 40% and EETP is funded at 60%. Each Nebraska Higher Education institution has been given all information concerning these programs, plus information about each program is posted on the NDE website at <http://www.education.ne.gov/neteachered/>

Clearly, the state of Nebraska realizes the importance of having Highly Qualified teachers, and is using various strategies, as well as contributing many resources, so all teachers are adequately prepared and appropriately endorsed.

Requirement 2: The revised plan must provide information on HQT in each LEA and the steps the SEA will take to ensure that each LEA has plans in place to assist teachers who are not highly qualified to attain HQT status as quickly as possible.

1) Does the plan identify LEAs that have not met annual measurable objectives for HQT?

There were 253 LEAs in the State of Nebraska in 2009-2010. Of those districts, all but 39 are 100% NCLB-Qualified, and of those 39, 23 are REAP-eligible districts. With 75% of all districts being REAP-eligible, and 66% of all districts having 500 or fewer students, Nebraska faces some unique challenges as compared to states with larger urban populations.

There might be only one course in an entire LEA that is taught by a non-NCLB Qualified teacher, and in a small district that has fewer than 20 teachers, one course being taught by a non-qualified teacher significantly impacts the NCLB Highly Qualified Percentage for that district.

The State Plan has identified the goal of 100% of all applicable teachers meeting NCLB requirements. The Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) for each school and district that has not already attained 100% NCLB Qualified status, is to make progress to improve the percentage of teachers who are NCLB Qualified, and clearly there is evidence that this is being done, as 214 LEAs have reached the

100% NCLB Qualified Teacher Goal—84.58% of all LEAs in the state in 2009-2010. (In 2006-07, only 91 districts, or 35.83%, had 100% NCLB Qualified teachers, and in 2008-2009, 57.48% had reached 100% NCLB-Qualified teachers.) Data regarding LEA progress is reviewed annually and personal contacts by NDE staff members are made to administrators of schools not achieving AMO.

Table 6 below identifies the 39 districts that are not at 100% NCLB-Qualified Status in 2009-2010, along with other specific data about each district, including the content areas in each district that have courses taught by non-NCLB Qualified teachers.

Table 6.
Nebraska Districts less than 100% HQT, 2009-2010.

AGENCY ID	DISTRICT PK-12 POPULATION	% TEACHERS W/ >3 YRS. EXPERIENCE	% MINORITY	% POVERTY (FRL)	AVG. TOTAL TE. EXP. (YEARS)	CONTENT AREA— # COURSES **	DIST. AVG. HQT COURSES ***	CLASS
07-0006-000	1495	85.95	31.84	41.74	17.48	1 ESL LA, 1 ESL Math	99.19	III
12-0032-000	105	85.71	5.71	54.29	13.36	2 LA, 1 Sci, 1 Music	91.11	II
12-0056-000	719	94.92	9.32	45.76	17.47	1 ESL LA, 2 Elem Math*	98.78	III
13-0022-000	376	81.82	4.26	30.05	15.13	1 Math, 1 Reading	98.20	III
13-0056-000	653	85.71	5.82	25.73	13.18	1 SE LA, 1 SE Math, 1 SE Sci, 1 SE Soc, 1 Math	95.91	III
14-0541-000	108	73.68	1.85	29.63	14.29	2 SS	95.56	III
15-0010-000	548	96.00	19.64	31.82	19.12	1 Reading, 1 SE LA, 1 SE Math, 2 ESL LA, 1 Sci, 5 Math, 1 Elem	89.22	III
19-0039-000	147	80.00	6.08	29.05	17.20	1 Econ	98.73	III
21-0025-000	876	87.88	6.39	35.96	18.82	1 Math	99.62	III
23-0071-000	239	96.15	4.18	46.44	19.04	1 Math	98.61	III
24-0001-000	2805	84.46	82.71	76.97	13.70	2 SS, 1 Sci	99.61	III
26-0001-000	435	92.50	7.13	24.83	14.87	6 SE LA, 5 SE Math, 1 SE Sci, 3 Art	83.45	III
27-0062-000	281	89.66	7.83	34.52	16.45	2 SE LA, 2 SE Math	96.15	III
28-0001-000	48692	80.78	61.55	67.41	11.24	2 Elem, 2 Sci, 3 Reading, 5 SE Sci, 10 SE Math, 11 SE LA	99.17	V
30-0054-000	124	85.00	9.02	18.05	20.15	1 Math	98.57	III
34-0001-000	410	92.68	8.78	46.83	21.33	2 Sci	98.86	III
40-0002-000	8902	80.38	49.67	61.03	14.29	2 Sci, 4 SS, 8 LA, 1 ESL Math	98.08	III
43-0079-000	147	60.00	3.40	44.09	13.35	2 FL	96.67	III
53-0001-000	566	77.08	15.02	51.77	16.23	3 SE LA, 2 SE Math*	96.73	III
55-0001-000	34915	84.63	23.82	42.12	15.57	3 Sci, 1 Music, 1 SE Art, 1 SE Sci, 2 SE LA, 3 SE Soc, 15 SE Math	99.54	IV
55-0160-000	2034	92.13	5.80	11.90	17.76	1 FL	99.15	III
56-0006-000	206	91.30	4.85	40.78	16.36	1 SE LA, 2 SE Math, 1 Math	94.67	II
56-0007-000	293	96.55	4.10	32.08	14.82	1 SE Math, 1 SE Sci	98.52	III
59-0001-000	508	88.24	67.72	54.92	17.26	1 Reading	99.49	III
59-0080-000	278	87.10	12.95	41.73	13.31	2 SE LA, 2 SE Math, 1 SE Sci, 1 SE Soc	95.38	III
61-0004-000	779	85.71	5.78	46.60	16.44	1 SE LA, 2 SE Math*, 4 Music	96.15	III
62-0021-000	423	79.41	16.27	63.21	16.59	1 Art	99.02	III
64-0023-000	299	81.82	6.19	37.54	16.77	1 Math	99.10	III
65-2005-000	651	85.96	4.45	45.47	18.73	1 Math*	99.50	III
66-0027-000	742	91.23	1.89	24.12	16.56	1 Math	99.53	III

70-0542-000	243	92.31	5.35	36.21	21.96	3 FL, 1 Math	93.75	III
71-0001-000	3632	83.76	33.15	47.71	15.64	1 SE Sci, 1 SE Soc*	99.40	III
71-0005-000	714	95.08	26.33	35.99	19.21	1 FL	99.50	III
73-0017-000	1442	91.43	6.45	37.10	17.23	2 Reading	98.86	III
74-0070-000	454	97.62	4.19	46.92	19.48	2 SE LA, 1 SE Math*	97.87	III
77-0037-000	2921	79.47	3.59	7.05	12.79	1 SE Math	99.85	III
86-0001-000	89	76.47	3.09	43.30	14.76	4 Sci	92.59	II
87-0017-000	461	77.08	98.29	76.92	12.35	1 SE LA, 1 SE Math*	97.85	III
90-0017-000	876	90.16	11.07	29.22	16.90	1 FL, 3 SE LA, 2 SE Math*	95.98	III
Averages of districts < 100% NCLB-Qualified	3066	86.10	17.58	40.95	16.34		97.13	CI II=3, CI III=34, CI IV=1, CI V=1
Nebraska Averages	1164	86.83	11.93	39.72	16.91		99.54	

Source: Nebraska Department of Education, 2009-2010 State of the Schools Report, October 2010

* Indicates teacher has a Provisional Special Education certificate.

** Indicates number of courses taught in the content area by non-NCLB qualified teachers.

Content Area codes key: Econ=Economics; Elem=Elementary; LA=English/Language Arts; FL=Foreign Language; Math=Mathematics; Sci=Natural Sciences; SE=Special Education; Soc=Social Sciences; Read=Reading, VPA=Visual & Performing Arts.

*** *Bold italic numbers* indicate districts that had lower percentages toward 100% NCLB Qualified Staff in 2009-2010 as compared to the previous school year.

Upon review of the 39 districts that do not have 100% NCLB Qualified teachers, 23 districts are at 98% or higher NCLB Qualified. No districts are below 83.45% NCLB Qualified. In comparing 2008-2009 data to 2009-2010 data, only 16 districts in the state had a lower NCLB-Qualified percentage in 2009-2010 than they did in 2008-2009, which is significantly less than in 2008-2009, when 75 districts had lower percentages than they did in the previous school year. If a HQ teacher leaves a district, it is many times difficult to find another HQ and properly endorsed teacher, especially in the very rural and sparsely populated areas of the state. (This is exactly what happened in the case of Thedford, a small rural district in a sparsely populated western part of the state, when the science teacher resigned after the first few weeks of school. Fortunately, there was another certified teacher residing in the district, although that teacher did not have the proper endorsement at the time. This teacher has recently completed additional course work to be appropriately endorsed and NCLB qualified.) A very small number of districts—only 7 of these 39—have five or more courses taught by non-NCLB Qualified teachers—the other 32 have from one to four courses taught by a NCLB-Not Qualified Teacher. Again, this indicates the Nebraska school districts are quite serious about making sure all teachers are HQ and all have the proper endorsements for the courses they teach.

In comparing the averages of these 39 districts to the statewide Nebraska averages of all districts, the percentage of teachers in a district with more than three years teaching experience is almost the same (86.10 % as compared to 86.83% Statewide), as is the number of years of teaching experience (16.34 years as compared to 16.91 years.) The percentage of minority students in the 39 districts is slightly higher than the overall statewide average, although not significant. Since the three largest districts in the state all appear in the group with non-NCLB Qualified teachers, this is to be expected. The percentage of poverty in the two groups is almost the same—40.95% as compared to the

statewide average of 39.72%. It appears there are no significant differences in the group of districts with less than 100%-NCLB Qualified Teachers and the group of all 253 districts across the state in regard to years of teaching experience, percentage of teachers with more than three years of teaching experience, student minority population, or student poverty percentages.

2) Does the plan include specific steps that will be taken by LEAs that have not met annual measurable objectives?

Concentrated efforts on the part of NDE are made to make sure all Nebraska superintendents are notified concerning the teachers in their districts who are non-NCLB qualified. Districts can now check their district's non-NCLB Qualified Teacher Verification Report via the NSSRS portal, beginning in March of the current school year. (Previously this had been a paper report that was mailed to district administrators in September of the following school year.) District superintendents are also sent an e-mail notification, and if teachers still appear as NCLB-Not Qualified after June 1, a phone call is made to that superintendent. The advantage of notifying districts during the current school year is that those administrators can make needed changes in teaching assignments for the next school year, or assist in providing professional development opportunities for those teachers over the summer months. NDE technical assistance is also available to those districts and/or teachers in completing the HOUSS application, if needed. Districts that have had teachers teaching out of their endorsed area(s) for two consecutive years are notified in early spring (generally March) as to who those teachers are. The NCLB Consolidated Application, which is completed annually by each district, requires each district to submit a district plan that identifies the steps that will be taken to help all teachers reach HQT status as soon as possible if the district is not already at 100% NCLB Qualified status. NDE staff members are assigned to monitor these districts, conduct on-site visits, and provide the needed technical assistance and advice, since Nebraska is a local-control state.

3) Does the plan delineate specific steps the SEA will take to ensure that all LEAs have plans in place to assist all non-HQ teachers to become HQ as quickly as possible?

The plans, which are part of the NCLB Consolidated Application, are reviewed annually by the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) staff members responsible for monitoring each LEA. NDE provides technical assistance to LEAs as needed. No NCLB formula grant funds are available to an LEA until their plan is approved.

NDE also offers many and various professional development opportunities for teachers each year, including the summer months. Many of these opportunities are in cooperation with the 18 Educational Service Units (ESUs) located throughout the state. A teacher may attend any professional development opportunity offered at any ESU in the state or at NDE throughout the year at minimal cost (if any.)

There are also numerous professional development opportunities offered at various conferences and workshops held throughout the state each year, as well as national conference opportunities, many of which are held in the Midwest. The NDE staff members do everything they can to make opportunities for professional development available and to ensure all teachers in all

classrooms are NCLB-qualified. All of the state's institutions of higher education also target districts and teachers with information concerning summer courses and on-line courses available each year.

Requirement 3: The revised plan must include information on the technical assistance, programs, and services that the SEA will offer to assist LEAs in successfully completing the HQT plans, particularly where large groups of teachers are not highly qualified, and the resources the LEAs will use to meet their HQT goals.

1) Does the plan include a description of the technical assistance the SEA will provide to assist LEAs in successfully carrying out their HQT plans?

Depending on the definition of “large groups of teachers”, there are relatively few Nebraska districts in which this would apply. Of the 39 districts that do not have a 100% NCLB Qualified staff in 2009-2010, 30 of those districts have five or fewer courses taught by a non-NCLB qualified teacher. Schools as well as districts that do not meet AYP and have less than 90% HQT are targeted for focused technical assistance from NDE, and are encouraged to use their Title II funds for the purpose of assisting their teachers in becoming Highly Qualified, including district-wide professional development. In addition, REAP district superintendents or principals are contacted via telephone concerning the NCLB Qualified status for teachers teaching out of their endorsed area for two consecutive years to discuss the situation and to develop strategies to address this concern, including strategies that might apply in each school's or district's situation. District administrators and teachers are always provided needed technical assistance by NDE staff free of charge, and NDE staff members make on-site visits to districts on a regular basis.

The Math and Science Partnership Program (MSP) has initiated statewide professional development grants in mathematics and science, specifically targeting teachers needing to meet NCLB requirements for HQT in schools and districts that did not make AYP. This has indeed been helpful to the small percentage of math and science teachers who are assigned to teach areas for which they are not appropriately endorsed or Housse qualified. Information concerning needed professional development is also made available to the ESUs (Educational Service Units) across the state, the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, and NDE state staff. NDE's curriculum consultants provide numerous content workshops during the summer and fall months that are designed to address K-12 content standards and teaching strategies.

The AYP districts listed in Table 5, the districts that did not show improvement toward 100% NCLB Qualified Teachers (or AMO) in Table 6, and the four Native American districts listed in Table 10 are a focus for targeted recruitment for a variety of professional development activities, including college content courses, on-site visits from NDE curriculum staff specialists on a regular basis, and statewide conferences and trainings that apply.

2) Does the plan indicate that the staffing and professional development needs of schools

that are not making AYP will be given high priority?

NDE makes special efforts to ensure that the AYP schools and those schools with the greatest percentages of non-HQT teachers are utilizing the services of the department. Those districts in particular are advised to advertise vacant positions on the NDE Teach in Nebraska website at <http://www.nebraskaeducationjobs.com> which has been highly successful in helping school districts find teachers to fill vacant positions. In addition, the NDE website has an NCLB Qualified Lookup System, so administrators or human resources personnel can check to see if prospective candidates are NCLB Qualified before they hire a new teacher. Nebraska has also taken the position that if a teacher is considered NCLB Qualified in another state, s/he is considered NCLB qualified in Nebraska and only has to produce documentation from that state indicating HQ status.

Once the public school districts submit curriculum information and NCLB Qualified Status of each teacher for each course is verified, districts are notified through Weekly Bulletin communication that administrators need to check the NCLB-Qualified Status Verification Report for their district via the NSSRS data system. This gives district administrators information about the NCLB-Qualified Status of their teachers during the current school year, so that they can plan appropriate staffing changes as necessary, provide additional needed professional development opportunities, or complete HOUSSE applications prior to the end of that school year. (Previously, this was a paper-generated report that was mailed to districts at the beginning of the following school year.) Additionally, each school district has an assigned NDE staff person that monitors each district, and those staff members are notified when there are districts that need immediate attention.

3) Does the plan include a description of programs and services the SEA will provide to assist teachers and LEAs in successfully meeting HQT goals?

- NDE staff members continually give presentations in a variety of settings to assist school administrators, teacher educators, and teachers in understanding the HQT requirements and strategies for meeting those requirements. Monitoring by NDE staff of all districts is an ongoing process, and NDE technical assistance is provided to all districts daily.
- NDE was instrumental in creating the Transition to Teaching program and the Transitional Teaching Certificate, which has significantly reduced the number of teachers who are teaching out of their endorsed area(s). This is Nebraska's recognized alternative certification program.
- Travel by the NDE World Language consultant to Spain, Germany, and China to recruit teachers to Nebraska for a period of three years as a means of lessening the severe shortage of foreign/world language teachers in the state is a continual and ongoing process.
- NDE continues to manage state and federal loan forgiveness programs for individuals teaching in content shortage areas or teaching in high poverty districts.
- Emphasis is given by the State Board's advisory committee on teacher education and teacher certification (Nebraska Council on Teacher Education) to address the recruitment, retention, and renewal issues surrounding the teaching profession and support legislative proposals that deal with these issues.
- The development and increasing usage of the Teach in Nebraska website by Nebraska (and out-of-state) teachers and administrators is ongoing, with increased usage each year.

- Repeated NDE and statewide use of the Teacher Shortage Survey information is used to promote teaching as a profession, especially in the shortage areas.
- NDE task force work to develop a process for licensure/certificate renewal on the basis of professional growth in a manner that is consistent with the expectations of NCLB and HQT is currently in process.
- Educator preparation programs are always encouraged to recruit diverse candidates so there are more available educators for the state's growing number of diverse students. NDE staff assistance is being provided to those programs that have funding available to recruit diverse candidates and provide support services to assure program success.
- Career academies for secondary students interested in teaching as a profession are being implemented through some ESUs across the state, and some school districts are sponsoring Future Educator Clubs for secondary students. Efforts are underway to develop a statewide conference for the local organizations as a way to enhance the recruitment of quality candidates to the teaching profession.
- The statewide distance learning system is used often to allow equal opportunities for all students to obtain college credit for courses that might not be offered in a traditional classroom setting.
- Educator preparation programs are recruiting individuals with baccalaureate degrees into preparation programs as one method of increasing the availability of HQ teachers. Fast-track programs and alternative certification programs to assist existing teachers in becoming HQ special education teachers are being offered in a number of Nebraska educator preparation programs.
- Nebraska recently implemented a dual-teaching certificate which allows mid-career professionals to teach dual-credit courses to high school-age students.

Additional efforts are underway to assist in making sure all teachers in all districts are NCLB-Qualified for the courses they teach, and further information can be found on the NDE website: <http://www.education.ne.gov/federalprograms/nclbqualifiedteachers.htm>

4) Does the plan specifically address the needs of any subgroups of teachers identified in Requirement 1?

The subgroups of teachers identified in Requirement 1 (*English/Language Arts, history and geography, mathematics, and natural sciences*) will be suggested as priorities for the SAHE (State Agency for Higher Education/Nebraska Coordination Commission for Post-Secondary Education or NCCPE) when the next round of Title IIA proposals are received, as those content areas all show less than 99.5% NCLB-Qualified in 2009-2010. A representative of NDE sits on the review panel when the proposals are evaluated and provides support for the funding of those projects which best address the HQT needs of schools.

5) Does the plan include a description of how the State will use its available funds (e.g.

Title I, Part A; Title II, Part A, including the portion that goes to the State agency for higher education; other Federal and State funds, as appropriate) to address the needs of teachers who are not highly qualified?

In addition to all of the activities identified in #3 above, Title IIA funds are being used to support high quality professional development, such as the annual Hispanic/Latino Conference. The Math and Science Partnership funds are supporting statewide professional development for hundreds of math and science teachers. SAHE monies are supporting projects for math teachers, social science teachers, teachers working on Spanish endorsements, and reading and writing professional development for elementary teachers.

6) Does the plan for the use of available funds indicate that priority will be given to the staffing and professional development needs of schools that are not making AYP?

NDE believes that HQT and AYP are equal priorities for all available funds. As a result, the projects and activities that are funded are designed to serve both audiences and all of the schools in either category. For example, priority is given to math and science teachers who are not HQ and are employed in schools that have not made AYP when the Math and Science Partnership grantees provide professional development opportunities for teachers.

Requirement 4: The revised plan must describe how the SEA will work with LEAs that fail to reach the 100 percent HQT by the end of the 2006-2007 school year.

1) Does the plan indicate how the SEA will monitor LEA compliance with the LEAs HQT plans described in Requirement 2 and hold LEAs accountable for fulfilling their plans?

Each school district must submit a plan for meeting HQT goals as part of their NCLB Consolidated Application each year. The NCLB Consolidated Application includes: Titles I-A, II-A, II-D, III-LEP, III-IA, IV-A, V, and Migrant. Monitoring of the NCLB Consolidated Application and all eight programs includes a required on-site visit at least once every three years. NCLB's HQT requirements and the district's HQT plans are reviewed during these on-site visits.

Nebraska annually monitors the Staff Assignment, Curriculum, and "Not-NCLB Qualified" reports to determine if teachers of NCLB's core academic areas, including Special Education teachers, are meeting the HQ requirements. This has been an ongoing process for many years. These reports are also matched to the data contained in the Teacher Certification system, which impacts Rule 10 Accreditation and Approval for all public school districts. Nebraska's Rule 10 Accreditation requirements are even more stringent than the federal NCLB requirements.

There are now 189 districts eligible for the REAP program, and NDE staff works with these districts so they can implement effective measures so all teachers are highly qualified. In many cases,

teachers seek additional endorsements in the assigned teaching area at the request of the district, or districts provide needed professional development.

In 2006-2007, NDE developed a tracking mechanism for analyzing all school buildings' progress and tracking their AYP and HQT data over time. Once the data information is public, analysis occurs to determine progress or non-progress on their annual measurable objectives for HQT and the information is reviewed with NDE staff members designated as monitors for these buildings. Any building that does not make progress for two consecutive years receives technical assistance from NDE staff, and then notified they are subject to the provisions of Section 2141 of the ESEA if their non-NCLB qualified staff members are not NCLB-qualified within the year. Fewer than ten districts needed to be notified of this in 2007-08. NDE staff members then contact the districts and work with them to assist in the plans to make sure all teachers become NCLB Qualified. Obviously, this extra time and effort is yielding results, as in 2008-09, only one school had to be notified they were out of compliance. Nebraska school districts clearly are making excellent progress toward 100% NCLB Qualified Teachers.

2) Does the plan show how technical assistance from the SEA to help LEAs meet the 100 percent HQT goal will be targeted toward LEAs and schools that are not making AYP?

All Title I schools and districts not making AYP receive an on-site visit from the NDE Title I office to determine areas of need and the technical assistance needed in each area. These needs are then reviewed with NDE staff to provide a support team to work with the schools. NDE staff provides assistance in targeting professional development opportunities and other school improvement activities as part of that technical assistance.

NDE utilizes a variety of methods to provide information to LEAs regarding HQT and AYP. The Administrator of Federal Programs broadcasts a bi-monthly update to all schools on NCLB and regular weekly e-mail bulletins are sent to school administrators as well. Staff members provide technical assistance in person, by telephone, e-mail, and postal mail as needed. Each LEA is assigned an NDE staff person who acts as the liaison between NDE and the LEA. State staff members with responsibilities for NCLB meet twice monthly to assure that regulations are being addressed and problems are being resolved.

3) Does the plan describe how the SEA will monitor whether LEAs attain 100 percent HQT in each LEA and school:

- **In the percentage of highly qualified teachers at each LEA and school; and**
- **In the percentage of teachers who are receiving high-quality professional development to enable such teachers to become highly qualified and successful classroom teachers?**

Both of these issues are addressed in the NCLB Consolidated Application that the LEA must submit electronically at the beginning of the year in order to receive funds. The LEA plan must show how the district will support and help non-HQ teachers gain content knowledge, including the following:

- Provide professional development opportunities,
- Use of Title I and Title IIA funds, and

- Provide funds for college-credit courses, if appropriate.

In order to be accredited through Rule 10 in Nebraska, all LEAs must have a professional development plan on file for every teacher employed by the district. The state statute governing this requirement stipulates that all teachers who are not probationary teachers must complete at least six hours of approved coursework every six years or participate in an equivalent amount of approved professional development. It is the responsibility of the district to approve the work, maintain the records, and assure that the statute is being met. The information is kept at the local level and is reviewed during an on-site monitoring visit. This requirement and the related documentation will be an avenue to insure that HQT is a primary consideration in the professional development planning.

4) Consistent with ESEA 2141, does the plan include technical assistance or corrective actions that the SEA will apply if LEAs fail to meet HQT and AYP goals?

The SEA has required all districts to include a plan for reaching the goal of 100% HQ in the annual NCLB Consolidated Application, which districts submit every year. Nebraska established new baseline data in 2006-2007, as a result of district consolidation in 2005-2006 (which was the result of legislative action requiring all elementary-only districts to affiliate with a K-12 district.) This has allowed valid comparison of data from consecutive years. This plan must address how each district that is not 100% HQ will provide professional development and support to non-HQ teachers so they become 100% HQ as quickly as possible.

When an LEA fails to make progress toward meeting the objective of 100% HQT and AYP goals for three consecutive years, the SEA and LEA will enter into an agreement as required in Section 2141. NDE notifies districts that the district needs to pay strict attention to the matter if they have not made progress toward 100% HQT and have not met AYP for two consecutive years, and NDE provides technical assistance to the few districts in this category. Should a LEA have to enter into a Section 2141 agreement, NDE provides technical assistance to the LEA in the development of the plan, provides information on strategies that can be used to implement the plan and meet the objectives, and closely monitors the progress.

Requirement 5: The revised plan must explain how and when the SEA will complete the HOUSSE process for teachers not new to the profession who were hired prior to the end of the 2005-2006 school year, and how the SEA will discontinue the use of HOUSSE procedures for teachers hired after the end of the 2005-2006 school year (except for the situations described below).

1) Does the plan describe how and when the SEA will complete the HOUSSE process for all teachers not new-to-the-profession who were hired before the end of the 2005-2006 school year?

Nebraska continues to monitor all districts relative to their achievement of (or progress toward) 100% NCLB Qualified Staff. There has been little need to use the HOUSSE process for teachers hired before the end of 2005-2006. However, the option continues to be available on a case-by-case basis, and is generally restricted to:

- Special education teachers with teaching assignments in content areas for which they are not specifically endorsed;
- Teachers of core academic subjects who are assigned to courses for which they are not endorsed (e.g. in very remote, small, rural districts or because of sudden and unexpected changes in teaching staff); and
- Teachers in REAP schools who are qualified in one core academic area and have two additional years to become qualified in other areas.

All new-to-the-profession elementary teachers and elementary special education teachers must take and pass the EECIA (Elementary Education: Curriculum and Instruction Assessment) to be considered NCLB-Qualified in Nebraska.

2) Does the plan describe how the State will discontinue the use of HOUSSE after the end of the 2005-2006 school year, except in the following situations:

- **Multi-subject secondary teachers in rural schools who, if HQ in one subject at the time of hire, may use HOUSSE to demonstrate competence in additional subjects within three years of the date of hire; or**
- **Multi-subject special education teachers who are new to the profession, if HQ in language arts, mathematics, or science at the time of hire, may use HOUSSE to demonstrate competence in additional subjects within two years of the date of hire.**

Nebraska has 189 rural school districts (REAP-eligible Districts) that are eligible to use the HOUSSE to demonstrate competence of teachers who teach in multiple subject areas, as long as they are already NCLB-qualified in one core academic subject area. A specific data analysis process has been implemented to identify which teachers are eligible for this flexibility and technical assistance is provided to the LEAs to assure that this requirement can be met as needed. The same process is utilized to identify multi-subject special education teachers who can benefit from the HOUSSE provisions, as long as they are already HQ in one of the core academic areas.

Nebraska makes every effort to limit the use of the HOUSSE to the following circumstances:

- when a teacher returns to the profession,
- when certified teachers are assigned out of their endorsed area due to local needs (small schools, sudden or unexpected staffing changes),

- when a teacher comes from another state and needs the HOUSSE to be approved in Nebraska,
- when certified special education teachers are assigned to teach content and assign grades to students with disabilities in content areas for which they are not specifically endorsed, or
- for teachers in REAP-eligible schools that are NCLB-qualified in one core academic area, but are teaching in multiple subject areas.

Quality professional development and college course work are not always easily accessible in the state's many rural districts, especially in the sparsely-populated areas of the state. However, improvements are being made, and with the addition of on-line programs through the state's approved higher education institutions, a teacher has added opportunities to become 100% NCLB Qualified for all courses s/he might be assigned. Nebraska also carefully monitors which courses are approved for re-certification.

Progress is indeed being made toward the goal of having 100% NCLB-Qualified Teachers in each and every classroom across the state.

Requirement 6: The revised plan must include a copy of the State's written "equity plan" for ensuring that poor or minority children are not taught by inexperienced, unqualified, or out-of-field teachers at higher rates than other children.

1) Does the revised plan include a written equity plan?

The Nebraska Equity Plan begins on the next page (page 26) of this document.

2) Does the plan identify where inequities in teacher assignment exist?

Inequities in teacher assignments are addressed beginning on page 27.

3) Does the plan delineate specific strategies for addressing inequities in teacher assignment?

Specific strategies are addressed beginning on page 32.

4) Does the plan provide evidence for the probable success of the strategies it includes?

Evidence for the probable success of the strategies is addressed beginning on page 33.

5) Does the plan indicate that the SEA will examine the issue of equitable teacher assignment when it monitors LEAs, and how will this be done?

Plans for monitoring equitable teacher assignment are addressed beginning on page 33.

NEBRASKA'S EQUITY PLAN

The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) has had a comprehensive curriculum and personnel data system for more than ten years. This system provides data on all personnel employed by each district who work in a professional capacity. Beginning in 2006-2007, the new Nebraska Staff and Student Reporting System (NSSRS) was implemented for use by every school district, after being piloted in 2005-2006 by 15 school districts of varying sizes and geographic locations across the state. The NSSRS system provides for data entry by the individual school districts through a portal. Following entry, data is reviewed for accuracy and districts have an opportunity to correct data errors. NSSRS (and the previous system) both provide the following:

- Unique identifiers of teachers and all other professional employees of the districts. The previous system was based on Social Security numbers. The NSSRS system provides unique identification numbers that mask Social Security numbers.
- Data about the professionals such as the highest degree earned and course assignments for those who are identified as teachers, including special education teachers.
- Years of experience, both in the profession and in the school district.

Data from NSSRS is linked to the Teacher Certification system by the unique identifier numbers of a district's employees so reports can be generated by district and building that describe the following:

- Certification status, including types of certificates held, previous certificates, content preparation, and expiration dates of all current certificates,
- Employment experience in Nebraska schools,
- Highest degree earned, when earned, and from what institution,
- The courses being taught by each teacher and if the teacher is appropriately endorsed to teach each course, and
- Scores on Praxis tests, if required.

The NSSRS system provides comprehensive student information that was not previously available, such as gender, race/ethnicity, Special Education, ELL (English Language Learner), Free/Reduced Lunch (Poverty), and Migrant information. The student data system now allows for tracking of students from building to building, district to district, to postsecondary education, and will ultimately track to employment.

An addition to the Teacher Certification system has been made which allows district administrators and even the public to "look up" teachers who have been deemed HQ through completion of the statewide assessment or Praxis II/Elementary Education: Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment test for "new to the profession" elementary teachers, and those teachers who have successfully completed the Housse process for content area assignments.

1) Inequities in teacher assignment

The Nebraska Department of Education Rule 10, Accreditation of Public Schools, has for many, many years required each school district, regardless of student demographics, to meet the following requirements in terms of teacher assignments:

- 95% of **ALL** courses taught to elementary students must be taught by appropriately endorsed teachers;
- 90% of **ALL** courses taught to middle school students must be taught by appropriately endorsed teachers; and
- 80% of **ALL** courses taught to students in grades 9-12 must be taught by appropriately endorsed teachers.

This requirement is broader than the core academic areas identified in NCLB. As a result, school districts are very careful in their assignment of teachers to match courses appropriately.

A report is provided to each school district identifying the courses that are not taught by appropriately endorsed teachers. This report is calculated by comparing the courses identified on the Curriculum Report completed by each teacher each year and the endorsements on that teacher's certificate based on the Teacher Certification data base. This report is now provided to all school district administrators during the spring semester of the current school year so that every effort can be made to assign courses appropriately, or to arrange for professional development for any teacher teaching out of their endorsed area so that teacher can gain the necessary knowledge and skills to teach the course(s) inappropriately assigned.

The Approval and Accreditation Team of the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) reviews each school district's data annually to assure that the Rule 10 requirements are being met. If they are not, corrections must be made or the district will be recommended for probationary status the following year. It is very seldom that a school district is not able to make the corrections for the following year, as maintaining an accredited school is very important to Nebraska's citizens, regardless of the size of the school district.

The same process is completed for NCLB core academic areas, although the focus for these courses and teachers is the goal of 100% HQT. The data report for HQT is now provided to each school district administrator on an annual basis, also during the spring semester. This report assists the administrators with teacher assignments, planning for professional development in the needed content area(s), or completion of the HOUSS as appropriate. This information is also placed on the State of the Schools Report (SOSR) on the NDE website, and is available for each public school district and building. Special education teacher information is now included, beginning with the 2006-2007 school year.

NDE has developed a system to query school district information; including student characteristics (minority population, low-income population, ELL population, and special education population) so that it is relatively easy to identify districts and building that are not distributing

experienced teachers appropriately. This data is available on the State of the Schools Report (SOSR) on the NDE website. The SOSR is released each year at the beginning of the school year with much media attention. Not only does NDE take the education of our school students very seriously, but the general public is very interested in the SOSR data, as it is information that affects the whole state. Information concerning each school district is provided annually to NDE staff members who are responsible for monitoring the LEAs and approving the NCLB Consolidated Application.

3) Inequities in assignments currently exist in the following settings:

Data from the NSSRS Report system facilitates an analysis of potential inequities in assignments of teachers in a variety of settings. A comprehensive data set of school district information provides summary information concerning district demographics and personnel assignments without identifying specific students.

The data system contains comprehensive data on every public school building in the state. Data elements include: student demographics, minority percentage, poverty percentage, percentage of HQ courses by content area, and percentage of teachers with more than three years teaching experience in each building. The NDE Data Center combines all of the data elements (which can be found on the Nebraska Department of Education website under State of the Schools Report) into an Excel file which is utilized by the Federal Programs section and the Teacher Quality sections to determine which schools are not meeting expectations.

Data provided in this plan is generated by the data system. That information is examined by NDE staff and technical assistance is provided by the staff members that are monitoring those districts and buildings. Inequities that are identified by the analyses are addressed in a variety of ways that have been described in other parts of this plan.

Table 7 below shows a comparison between the 20 Class II (smallest) districts, the 189 REAP districts, the 52 High Poverty districts, and the 10 High Minority districts as well as the statewide averages for Nebraska. (Note that all district numbers have stayed consistent with the exception of High Poverty districts. 2008-2009 data indicates there were 37 High Poverty Districts.)

Table 7.
District Comparison Data, 2009-2010.

Type of District	# of Districts	Avg. % of HQ Courses	Avg. % Minority Students	Avg. % Poverty Students	Avg. Years Teaching Experience	Avg. % of Teachers w/ >3 yrs. Experience
All Districts	253[^]	99.54	26.19	41.22	15.26	86.83
# Class II	20	98.92	9.24	43.11	15.03	81.16
\$ High Poverty	52	99.64	26.78	60.34	16.01	84.40
% High Minority	10	99.61	80.55	73.29	13.51	81.49
REAP-Eligible Districts	189	99.51	9.85	40.80	17.15	86.74

Source: Nebraska Department of Education, 2009-2010 State of the Schools Report, October 2010

[^] Of the 253 Public School Districts, 214 (85%) have 100% NCLB-Qualified Teachers.

Class II Districts (20) are those public school districts having a population of 1,000 inhabitants or less and maintaining both elementary and secondary grades under the direction of a single school board. These are among the smallest districts in the state.

\$ High Poverty Districts (52) are those with 50% or more of the student population eligible for Free or Reduced Lunches.

% High Minority Districts (10) are those with a student population that is 50% or more non-Caucasian.

Rural schools

A review of the HQT data from the 189 school districts that are eligible for the Rural Education Achievement Program (REAP) illustrate the dedication these smaller, rural district administrators and local school boards have in making sure all teachers are 100% NCLB Qualified. The overall percentage of NCLB Qualified teachers is almost exactly the same as the statewide overall percentage—99.51% as compared to 99.54% statewide. Of the 189 REAP-eligible districts, only 23 districts did not have 100% NCLB Qualified Teachers (12%), and only two of those 23 are below 90% NCLB Qualified. In four of the 23 districts, the Special Education teacher has a Provisional Special Education endorsement, which reflects the difficulty districts have in finding appropriately endorsed Special Education teachers, as Special Education is always a shortage area. 21 of these 23 districts have between 91.11% to 99.50% NCLB Qualified Teachers. Further analysis of these 23 districts reveals many of them are in very rural, isolated areas of the state, and most often, have one or two courses in which the teacher is not 100% NCLB-Qualified, generally in mathematics or natural sciences (two of the shortage areas mentioned previously.) 166 of the REAP-Eligible Districts (88%) do have 100% NCLB Qualified Teachers, which is remarkable when all the challenges of hiring appropriately-endorsed and highly qualified teachers in all geographic regions of the state are taken into account.

Districts with the smallest enrollments have extreme difficulty in meeting the goal of 100% NCLB Qualified teachers, as they cannot afford to hire enough teachers or attract those teachers with the broadest or highest qualifications. Generally, those districts are in rather remote geographic areas, and this is definitely the case in Nebraska in 2009-2010. The rural districts rely heavily on the HOUSSE process because many of them are in sparsely populated areas and teachers have fewer professional development opportunities close by. Most of the time, these teachers have to teach a wider variety of courses as districts cannot afford to have several part-time teachers, even if there were teachers available.

Table 8 below shows a comparison of HQ teachers at the elementary and secondary levels for the REAP districts, the Class II districts, and all 254 districts.

Table 8.
Comparison of the percentages of courses taught by HQ teachers in the 189 REAP districts, 20 Class II Districts, and 253 Total Nebraska Districts (ALL) during 2009-2010.

	Elem.	English/ Language Arts	Foreign Language	Math	Natural Sciences	Civics & Govt.	Econ.	History & Geography	Vis. & Perform. Arts
REAP (189)	<i>99.97</i>	<i>99.44</i>	98.71	<i>99.16</i>	<i>99.35</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>99.56</i>	99.85
CLASS II (20)	<i>100</i>	98.61	<i>100</i>	98.85	96.31	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	99.38
ALL (253)	99.96	99.38	99.72	99.06	99.48	99.80	99.73	99.39	99.89

Source: Nebraska Department of Education, 2009-2010 State of the Schools Report, October 2010

Bold italics represent percentages higher than statewide average.

The Class II Districts have the greatest difficulty in meeting HQ requirements because of the small populations they serve, and most are located in very sparsely-populated geographic areas of the state. Students might have to ride 30-50 miles on a school bus to get to school (or be driven to school.) HOUSSE is critical for many districts, and is especially important for the smaller Class II districts. With very few exceptions, the REAP and Class II districts have fewer than four courses taught by non-NCLB Qualified teachers, and in most cases, only one course is taught by a non-NCLB Qualified Teacher. The shortage areas of Mathematics, English/Language Arts, Natural Sciences and Visual and Performing Arts are again reflected in the Class II percentages in those content areas, as is Foreign Language and Visual and Performing Arts in the REAP-eligible district information. Many districts are beginning to share teachers in some content areas to help alleviate the shortage, and to be able to offer a full-time position to get a teacher to come to the area. Distance learning courses are also becoming a more popular solution for districts that cannot find appropriately endorsed teachers.

Urban schools

Nebraska's two largest school districts are Omaha with a PK-12 student enrollment of 48,692 and Lincoln with a PK-12 student enrollment of 34,915, and are considered to be urban schools. Nationally, urban schools are usually considered as ones with multiple problems of inequity across the district. Nebraska's two urban schools, according to the data, have very few inequities in assignments because there are more opportunities for teachers to teach in the content areas for which they are prepared. Nebraska's school districts do not have problems with high teacher turn-over, and this is also true for the two largest districts. All Nebraska districts have an average of 15.26 years of teaching experience, with the Omaha Public School District teachers having an average of 11.24 years of teaching experience and the Lincoln Public School District teachers having an average of 15.57 years of teaching experience. This is true in all buildings, regardless of the poverty level of the building or the numbers of minority students. Table 9 below illustrates the level of experience of teachers that are employed in the urban buildings with the highest percentages of minority and poverty students (defined as 50% or more in each of the two categories.) Lincoln has only seven buildings out of 53 total with high levels of both minority and poverty, and all have 100% NCLB Qualified Teachers. The Omaha Public School district includes 83 buildings, of which 53 have high levels of both minority and poverty. None of those 53 buildings has less than 92% of the courses being taught by HQ teachers, and only 5 of the 53 buildings have less than 100% of courses taught by HQ teachers. The data indicates all buildings have HQ teachers with the majority of teachers having more than three years teaching experience.

Table 9.
Data on Urban buildings with >50% Minority and Poverty, 2009-2010.

District	PK-12 Population	# of Buildings/Total Buildings in District	Avg. % of HQ Courses (in buildings)	Avg. % of Minority (in buildings)	Avg. % of Poverty (FRL) (in buildings)	Avg. Yrs. of Te. Exp. (in buildings)	Avg. % of Teachers w/ +3 yrs. Experience (in buildings)
Lincoln	34,915	7/53	100	61.42	88.23	12.81	76.34
Omaha	48,692	53/83	99.82	75.07	80.82	11.12	81.34

Source: Nebraska Department of Education, 2009-2010 State of the Schools Report, October 2010

Native Schools

There are four districts in northeast Nebraska where the students are primarily Native-American. One of the district HQT percentages is lower than the average for the state. All four schools have a poverty level (FRL) that is significantly higher than the state average. NDE has two full-time staff members who work directly with these schools to improve student achievement. The University of Nebraska-Lincoln has a federal grant (Indigenous Roots Teacher Education Program) to prepare Native teachers so they can improve their HQT percentages. This program was preceded by another federal grant (the Native American Career Ladder Program) which prepared 20 Native students for teaching careers. The University of Nebraska-Lincoln has also developed a course for future teachers, focused on understanding Native students and their culture so that the instructional processes will be successful when working with Native students. Significant efforts are being made at the state and local levels to improve the educational experiences for Native students and families in these districts. These districts will continue to be a focus for NDE and HQT. Data concerning these four districts is illustrated in Table 10 below.

Table 10.
Native American School District Data, Nebraska, 2009-2010.

District	PK-12 Population	# of Buildings	Avg. % NCLB-Qualified	Avg. % Minority	Avg. % Poverty (FRL)	Avg. yrs. Te. Exp.	Avg. % of Teachers w/ >3 yrs. Te. Exp.
Santee	179	2	100	97.77	73.18	10.48	72.00
Walthill	341	2	100	97.65	83.58	12.97	86.84
Umo N Ho N	373	2	100	99.20	89.81	14.29	84.91
Winnebago	461	2	97.85	98.29	76.92	12.35	77.08

Source: Nebraska Department of Education, 2009-2010 State of the Schools Report, October 2010

Again, all of these districts have high percentages of HQ teachers, and a high majority of teachers with more than three years teaching experience. While the average years of teaching experience is not quite as high as the statewide average, the difference is not considered significant.

High Poverty Schools

There are nine districts in Nebraska where *both poverty and minority populations are 50% or higher*, as depicted in Table 11 below. Analysis of these districts indicates six have 100% NCLB Qualified Teachers, and 97.85% is the lowest NCLB Qualified percentage of the remaining three.

Table 11.
High Poverty and High Minority Nebraska Districts, 2009-2010.

District	PK-12 Population	# of Buildings	Avg. % NCLB-Qualified	Avg. % Minority	Avg. % Poverty (FRL)	Avg. yrs. Te. Exp.	Avg. % of Teachers w/ >3 yrs. Te. Exp.
24-0001-000	2805	6	99.61	82.71	76.97	13.70	84.46
59-0001-000	508	3	99.49	67.72	54.92	17.26	88.24
54-0501-000	145	2	100	57.93	77.93	15.24	82.61
54-0505-000	179	2	100	97.77	73.18	10.48	72.00
19-0123-000	1783	6	100	72.46	68.98	15.80	84.80

22-0011-000	3820	8	100	70.18	63.17	11.81	73.18
87-0013-000	341	2	100	97.65	83.58	12.97	86.84
87-0016-000	373	2	100	99.20	89.81	14.29	84.91
87-0017-000	461	2	97.85	98.29	76.92	12.35	77.08

Source: Nebraska Department of Education, 2009-2010 State of the Schools Report, October 2010

It is apparent from this analysis that there is equitable distribution of HQ teachers in the districts with high needs. While there are higher averages in student minority and student poverty, the teachers are from 97.85%-100% NCLB-Qualified, with a range of 10.48 years to 17.26 years of teaching experience. Only two districts are below the statewide average of 99.54% NCLB-Qualified. The other seven have from 99.61-100% NCLB-Qualified Teachers.

3) Specific strategies that will be used to address inequities in assignments include:

The following strategies will be utilized specifically to assist the rural schools:

- Professional development opportunities will be identified and advertised to school districts in the area where the need appears to be the greatest. Educator preparation programs will be encouraged to share this information with teacher education candidates so that new graduates can help to alleviate the shortages faced in many of the content areas.
- Promoting the Attracting Excellence to Teaching program, which is designed to attract candidates to teaching shortage areas and then provide loan forgiveness for teaching in sparsely populated areas. This program began in 2006-2007, and to date has supported 579 teacher preparation candidates that have received \$1,512,000 in loans.
- Technical assistance will be provided to schools in completing the HOUSSE when necessary.

Strategies that will assist all districts in the state include:

- Increasing the availability of quality professional development for teachers throughout the state through the Education Service Units (ESUs) in collaboration with the state's higher education institutions who have nationally accredited and approved educator preparation programs.
- Encouraging public schools to support college courses for teachers being able to move on the salary schedule, regardless of whether the courses are undergraduate or graduate courses. This will make it feasible for experienced teachers to add additional endorsements in the areas in which they are teaching, but not endorsed.
- Encouraging educator preparation programs to offer summer programs in special education for already certified content teachers and content courses for already certified special education teachers.
- Replicate programs like the University of Nebraska at Omaha that provides an opportunity for mid-career changers to complete a teacher education program that includes an NCLB content area and a special education endorsement in an 18-month time frame, with significant involvement in the public schools as a part of the program.
- A Professional Development Task Force will work to create a change in the renewal requirements for certification as an educator. The changes will require professional

development or college credit in order to renew a certificate. (Nebraska's renewal standards currently allow renewal on the basis of experience, without a requirement for any professional development.)

- Introduction of a legislative proposal that would require schools to have a mentoring/induction program and would fund the development of quality mentoring in all school districts.
- Promote the use of the NCLB-Qualified Look-Up System for identification of HQ teachers on the Teacher Certification website so employers can confirm the HQ status of applicants before hiring and assigning classes. This system is very easy to use and has been well received by district and building administrators.

4) Evidence for the probable success of these strategies includes:

All of these strategies have the potential to be successful. Many of them are already underway. The strategy that will be the most difficult to implement is the mentoring/induction program. The Legislature supported the development of a mentoring program several years ago, using the state's lottery money. However, funds were transferred to the general fund when a budget crisis occurred. Presently, all state budgets have faced budget cuts for the next two years due to another budget crisis situation. A quality mentoring program requires financial resources and commitment by the entire population of educators and policy makers. NDE and Nebraska schools are committed to providing quality teachers for all students and NDE hopes to prepare legislative proposals that would provide resources to assist schools in their efforts to provide HQ teachers for all students. However, an evaluation of Nebraska's previous mentoring/induction program did not provide substantive data that the programs increased retention of teachers, improved their quality, or increased student achievement. It is very difficult to convince the Legislature and the Governor to support increased expenditures for anything at this time due to the state's large budget crisis, and education is no exception. NDE is beginning discussions regarding a statewide mentoring program, but without funding, this will take a much longer time frame to implement.

The State of the Schools report (SOSR) already provides evidence of student achievement for each building. The trend data is used by schools and NDE to identify problems and solutions. Teacher data also exists on the SOSR and includes trend data on teacher count, teacher race/ethnicity, master's degrees, experience, teacher qualifications, and salaries. HQ status is reflected for each content area for each building. The trend data is analyzed annually and used to identify the success of the strategies that are in place and to develop new strategies where it is apparent that the existing ones are not successful.

5) NDE will examine the issue of equitable teacher assignment when it monitors LEAs in the following ways:

Nebraska's data system includes information about the years of experience of teachers in all of the public school districts and buildings. This information has been added to the system queries used to prepare Title IIA HQ reports. The experience of teachers is reported on the State of the Schools Report (SOSR) by building and at the district level. Table 12 provides an overview of the percentages of courses being taught by HQ teachers in various kinds of districts as well as the average number of years of

experience of all of the teachers in the districts and the percentage of teachers with more than three years of experience in the district. Monitoring visits to districts and buildings will include a review of the teacher assignment and HQ information.

Table 12.
An Overview of the Equity of Teacher Assignments in Nebraska School Districts, 2009-2010.

District Type	Number of Districts	% of HQ Elem.	% of HQ English/LA	% of HQ Foreign Lang.	% of HQ Math	% of HQ Science	% of HQ Civics & Govt.	% of HQ Econ.	% of HQ Hist. & Geog.	% of HQ Vis. & Perf. Arts	Av. Yrs. Te. Exp.	% Te. w/ >3 yrs. Exp.
ALL	253	99.96	99.38	99.72	99.06	99.48	99.80	99.73	99.39	99.89	15.26	86.83
CLASS II	20	100	98.61	100	98.85	96.31	100	100	100	99.38	15.03	81.16
REAP	189	99.97	99.44	98.71	99.16	99.35	100	100	99.56	99.85	17.15	86.74
Minority	10	99.99	99.23	100	99.16	99.81	100	100	99.59	100	13.51	81.49
Poverty	52	99.99	99.15	100	99.70	99.59	99.73	100	99.85	99.66	16.01	84.40
Lincoln	1	100	99.90	100	98.47	99.42	100	100	99.64	99.52	15.57	84.63
Omaha	1	99.86	98.76	100	98.29	99.03	100	100	98.84	100	11.24	80.78

Source: Nebraska Department of Education, 2009-2010 State of the Schools Report, October 2010

Shaded cells in Table 12 represent averages higher than the statewide HQ averages.

All = All public school districts in Nebraska. This includes all classes of districts from Class II through Class V.

Class II = Class II school districts serve an area with a population of 1,000 inhabitants or less but maintain a school district with both elementary and secondary grades under the direction of a single school board.

REAP = Districts that are considered rural and are eligible for funds from the Small Rural School Achievement Program.

Minority = Districts with a minority student population that equals 50% or more of the district PK-12 population.

Poverty = Districts with a Free or Reduced Lunch percentage of the population equal to 50% or more of the district PK-12 population.

Lincoln = The second largest school district in the state with a student population of 38,915 in 2009-2010.

Lincoln is the only Class IV district in the state and has 53 school buildings.

Omaha = The largest and most urban school district in the state with a student population of 48,692 in 2009-2010. Omaha is the only Class V district in the state and has 83 school buildings.

The last column in Table 12 describes the average percentage of teachers in each category who have more than three years teaching experience and, as a result, are considered experienced teachers. The State of the Schools Report lists average years of teaching experience in each district and each building, and is available to the public on the NDE website State of the Schools Report for the current year as well as school years prior to the current year.

(<http://reportcard.education.ne.gov/Main/Home.aspx>)

It is clear from the data that the average years of teaching experience, no matter what the type of district, is over ten years, and that at least 80.78% of all teachers have three years of experience or more in all of the types of districts. (These teachers are considered to be experienced teachers.) Both Lincoln and Omaha have strong relationships with the educator preparation programs in their communities, which creates opportunities for teacher candidates to work in urban settings with experienced and highly qualified cooperating teachers. As a result, the average years of experience in

those two districts will be lower because they hire new teachers to work in the settings with which they are already familiar. Both districts also have quality mentoring programs for their new teachers.

Ongoing review of the NSSRS Staff Assignment and Curriculum reports from all districts will occur. The non-endorsed reports, which are distributed to the LEAs are analyzed to see which schools need the most HQT assistance. NCLB Consolidated Application (HQT Plan) and on-site monitoring occur on a regular basis. NDE staff who are responsible for monitoring schools have copies of the non-endorsed reports to use during their monitoring visits. During the monitoring visits, staff review and document the progress made on the activities identified in the LEA plan.

In addition to these regular review processes, NDE staff members are in constant communication with school administrators and teachers in a variety of settings as well as electronically. Technical assistance is requested and provided on a regular (many times daily) basis.

The data that have been presented in this plan indicate that Nebraska, as a whole, has no significant differences in Highly Qualified Teacher distribution in high poverty and high minority settings. However, monitoring processes are in place to allow NDE to monitor all settings for adverse changes and employ interventions as necessary.

A review of student achievement data on the NDE State of the Schools Report will be utilized to evaluate the progress of students in high poverty and high minority buildings to further identify the impact of teacher distribution. Student achievement data is also found on the State of the Schools Report and is available for each building in the state.

The NDE staff monitor's responsibilities include a review of the data for their assigned districts and buildings and providing technical assistance in the areas of concern. NDE has developed a toolkit on the Continuous Improvement Process that is required of all districts. The toolkit and personal assistance from the monitors is intended to assist all districts in their efforts to improve the quality of instruction and the achievement of their students. The Nebraska Department of Education has, for many years, held student achievement as the highest priority, and having highly qualified teachers in each and every classroom will continue to be one of the state's top goals.